



The Weekly Page

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 5

FEBRUARY 13, 2009

Pages Learn About Legislature

Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Pages write bills



Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They had their choice of working up a social bill or a fiscal bill to present in a mock committee hearing on Thursday with

their partners. Hard decisions had to be made about cutting services and/or raising taxes in the budget committees. Topics for social bills included the death penalty, age limits on hunting, in vitro multiple birth restrictions, and tax credits for home schooling.

Serious fiscal crisis results in new cuts, taxes

Olympia—Yesterday, the House Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Representatives Nick Fagerness, Dillon Ahola, Aaron McGaughey, Will Cadra, and David Bartels regarding the projected revenue shortfall for the 2009-2011 biennium and the suggested remedies to balance the state operating budget. “We want to cause as little suffering as possible, but we are in a terrible economic cri-



sis, the worst we’ve seen in decades,” said Rep. Ahola. Among the list of cuts offered were reducing the number of personal bodyguards for the Governor and Lt. Governor, withholding funds for class size reductions, cutting goods and services by 25 percent, closing down the Washington State film office, and a 2 percent across-the-board cut to all state agencies. “I don’t like what we have had to propose,” said Rep. Bartels, “but we simply have to bite the bullet.” Although many legislators had made campaign promises to forgo raising taxes, the committee saw a need to make up for lost revenues by adding a one percent tax to entertainment venues, a 50 cent increase in the cigarette tax, a five cent tax on each soft drink bottle/can and a temporary .1 percent increase in the state sales tax. Rep. Cadra rationalized the sales tax increase is fair to everyone and would only last for the next two years. “There has not been an increase in the state sales tax since 1980, so it is long overdue. The revenue realized would be \$200 million.” Taxes on cigarettes and sodas would bring in another \$478 million. “I know times are bad, but we should come out of this situation in good shape if we make some sacrifices now,” said Rep. Fagerness.

Parental consent, video required before abortion



Olympia – House Bill 1879 was introduced yesterday by Representative Bethany Atwood. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion in Washington State and will make it harder for any women to have that medical procedure,” said Rep. Atwood. Abortion is legal through all nine months of a woman’s pregnancy. There were 24,850 abortions performed in 2007, as compared to 181 murders. Anyone in the state of Washington can get an abortion no matter what age and without parental consent. Unlike any other medical procedure, the details of abortion are kept from women. “Because of their ignorance, women are unaware of the details of the choice they are making, resulting in later grief and regret,” said Rep. Atwood. When this bill becomes law the Legislature will require women under the age of 18 to get parental consent before the procedure, and they will have to wait 24 hours before the abortion. In this time they will attend counseling. Also, any woman having an abortion will be required to watch a medically accurate video of an abortion prior to the procedure. In order to reduce the grief and regret that often follows an abortion, the legislature will require all the details of an abortion to be fully disclosed to the woman.

Yunker yearns for safer hiking



Olympia – House Bill 1102 was introduced yesterday by Representative Hannah Yunker. “This bill addresses the issue of safe hunting and will ultimately regulate the age limit for obtaining a hunting license in Washington State,” said Rep. Yunker. In order to provide safety in our forests

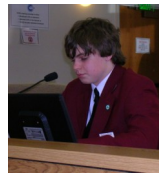
and an enjoyable time for people to enjoy this beautiful wildlife, the legislature will require an age limit of 18 years old for anyone to receiving a hunting license. If hunters are under the age of 18, the minor must have an adult of at least 25 years of age with him/her. Violators will be fined \$300 for the first infraction, and the price will increase by \$100 each time thereafter.

Children's health at risk: failure to immunize to blame

Olympia – House Bill 2468 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Emily Hunter and Rose Hopper. “This bill addresses the issue of mandatory vaccinations and will lower rates of contagion in the state,” said Rep. Hopper. This bill will require

parents and guardians to make sure that their children receive vaccines before the students attend school. The community as a whole is affected by those who could be infected by several viruses, according to Rep. Hunter. As the rate of immunization goes down, the rates of contagion go up. “We can't leave young children unprotected and susceptible to these horrible diseases,” warned Rep. Hunter, “Right now, the health of our children is at risk, and this is a problem that needs to be fixed.”

Take a deep breath



Olympia – Senate Bill 6001 was introduced yesterday by Senator Brad Sevey. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking in cars while children are present and will prevent deadly illness in children caused by secondhand smoke,” said

Sen. Sevey. This bill will make it illegal to smoke in cars while children are present. Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer causing. “Passengers in cars with smokers cannot escape these toxins, especially young children,” said Sen. Sevey. Violators will be faced with a \$1,000 fine when caught if this bill is passed into law.



Bill prevents unprepared parents from procreating

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Dan Thompson introduced House Bill 1017, which addresses the issue of unfit parents who pursue artificial insemination to have children. “The bill is a good one because it prevents irresponsible parenting,” said Rep. Thompson. If this bill becomes law, all parents planning on having children through *in vitro* fertilization methods will have to go through a thorough financial pre-screening as well as an extensive psychological review before implantation. The bill was introduced as a reaction to a recent report of an unmarried, unemployed California mother of six who was implanted with six embryos and ended up delivering octuplets.

Senate tries to balance budget



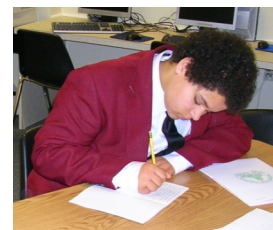
Olympia—Yesterday Senators Catherine Wolfe, Tyler Reed and Krissa Deans met with the Senate Ways and Means Committee to pound out hard solutions to a serious budget shortfall predicted for the next biennium. “There just doesn’t seem to be any way around raising some taxes,” said Sen. Deans. Among the suggested products slated for a tax increase were cigarettes and soda pop. Both Sen. Wolfe and Sen. Deans called for a 5 cent tax on pop and a 50 cent cigarette tax. “Smokers should have to pay more because the state is paying for some of their hospital bills,” said Sen. Deans. “Fifty cents will not significantly impact a smoker’s life. The tobacco market is huge and will continue to grow. This is money we can count on and will raise \$206 million,” said Sen. Wolfe. Other proposals included cuts in goods and services in all government sectors by 1/4.



“There is a lot of waste that we could eliminate,” said Sen. Reed. “This will save \$200 million. Lots of citizens are having to conserve and are suffering. We should have to feel the pinch, too.”

Sen. Thomas advocates healthier schools

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Chayce Thomas introduced Senate Bill 5001, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will make children healthier and kids will be able to live longer and better lives without having to go on diets or worry about dying early,” said Sen. Thomas. If this bill passes all candy, pop, sugar, snacks, and food with lots of calories will be banned from all public schools. “Once we get the unhealthy food out of the schools, they will need to begin working on providing longer and more intense P.E workouts,” said Sen. Thomas.



Bruner to enforce freedom of religion in public schools

Olympia – House Bill 2222 was introduced yesterday by Representative Laura Bruner. “This bill addresses the issue of freedom of religion in public schools and will prohibit any discrimination against students for their beliefs,” said Rep. Bruner. If passed, the law will require that teachers or adults in schools who harass students about their beliefs be fired or suspended from work and fined. Recently in Ohio, a teacher was told to put a Bible away that was on his desk during a science class. A group of students and some parents rallied for the teacher to be able to keep his Bible where it was.

Oceans becoming more polluted

Olympia – House Bill 3874 was introduced yesterday by Representative Micah Atwood. “This bill addresses the issue of ocean pollution and will make the ocean cleaner,” said Rep. Atwood. In order to make the North Pacific cleaner, coastal cities must regularly clean and maintain their storm drains if this bill becomes law. This will impede the movement of toxins and debris from floating out into the ocean, according to Rep. Atwood. “Our ocean's garbage dilemma can no longer be ignored,” said Rep. Atwood.

Guest speakers visit Page School



Michelle Gregoire, legislative aid for Sen. Kohl-Welles; Michael Martin, session aid for Rep. Kelli Linville; Representative Roger Goodman (D-45th) and Representative Deborah Eddy (D-48th) joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to



interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.

Death penalty costly and cruel

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Emma Trembay and Gerry Cercado introduced House Bill 3737, which addresses the issue of the death penalty in Washington State. “The bill is a good one because it will prevent cruel and costly punishment,” said Rep. Cercado. “Abolishing the death penalty would be a good way to save money in our economic crisis,” said Rep. Trembay. It costs about \$63 million to execute every death row inmate when the years of appeals are added to the daily expense of housing murderers. A lifetime incarceration costs about \$11.5 million. “So, we spend more money to end a life rather than to sustaining a life,” said Rep. Cercado. “We don’t have the right to decide wholives and who dies,” said Rep. Trembay.



Senators take aim at irresponsible hunting

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Riley Tinney and Stephanie Thomas introduced Senate Bill 6002, which addresses the issue of a minimum age for hunting licenses. “The bill is a good one because it promotes safer hunting and fewer accidents,” said Sen. Tinney. Statistics in Minnesota show that hunters 19 and under represented a minority of hunters, but were the shooters

in over 50 percent of hunting accidents. Recently, a 14-year-old hunter killed a woman while hunting on Sauk Mountain. The woman was hiking with a 16-year-old friend when the boy mistook her for a bear and shot her. This bill would require all hunters to be at least 14 years old and would require any hunter under the age of 18 to be accompanied by a licensed hunter of at least 21 years old who has held a license for five years. A \$200 fine will be charged for any violation of this requirement.

Rep. McCullough clears the air

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Ellie McCullough introduced House Bill 2890, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles. “The bill is a good one because it protects children’s health,” said Rep. McCullough. This bill attempts to tighten laws on smoking around minors. Anyone smoking in car with children present will be fined if this becomes law. Approximately one out of every five deaths in the United States each year is related to cigarette smoke.



Dangers of drunk driving reduced by House bill

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Anna Kiesel introduced House Bill 1619, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the dangers on our roads,” said Rep. Kiesel. Bill 1619 requires everyone convicted of drunk driving in the last 10 years to pay for a fluorescent yellow license plate to put on all vehicles that are registered to them. These license plates would be required for one year. It also requires anyone who has been convicted of driving drunk more than once in the last 10 years to pay for and put on their vehicles a light pink license plate for all vehicles that are registered to them. “These plates should be a deterrent to drunk driving by making people not want to have this embarrassing consequence. The colored plates will also alert the police and other drivers to possible drunk drivers on the road,” said Rep. Kiesel.



Mock committees debate bills, vote



Simulated committee hearings were held on Thursday. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Death penalty review will end mistakes

Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Estella Jung and Rachel McIrvin. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will prevent the execution of innocent people,” said Sen. Jung. There is evidence that many people on death row have been freed on the basis of DNA samples taken after their incarceration. In addition, some death row inmates were convicted and executed due to bad legal representation, lack of evidence, and corrupt witnesses. “It is not fair for innocent people to be on death row and/or be in prison for something they didn’t do,” said Sen. Jung. Death penalty trials are expensive: in Washington state more than \$470,000 is spent on regular trials. If this bill becomes a law, the Legislature will require DNA tests, investigations of much greater depth, and a review of due process before putting a person on death row.



Is your breakfast a setup for cancer?

Olympia – Senate Bill 7001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Melissa May and Ariel Moreau. “This bill addresses the issue of additives in our everyday foods and will result in better health for all consumers,” said Sen. Moreau. Bill 7001 states that the Legislature will increase the size of the nutrition labels and use more easily understood language for the additives titles. Sen. May said, “Consumers buy these popular foods everyday.



What they do not know about these foods can be a serious risk to their health.” Additives such as propyl gallate, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and aspartame can cause liver failure, heart diseases, lack of concentration, cancer, and many other symp-

toms. “Even I don’t understand the words on the side of my cereal box!” said Sen. Moreau.

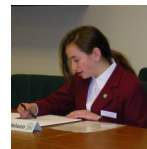
Home school tax credit planned



Olympia—House Bill 1527 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Candace Yost and Caleb Yost. “This bill addresses the issue of tax credits for home school families and will make school funding more fair,” said Rep. Candace Yost. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will establish a home school property tax reduction plan. Under this plan, any family who home schools its children and owns a home will be able to subtract the school portion of its property tax bill.

This plastic is killing me!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Lori Adelson introduced Senate Bill 6235, which addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution. “The bill is a good one because it will help the environment,” said Sen. Adelson. Plastic bags kill hundreds of marine animals daily. Marine wildlife eat plastic bags, thinking that they are food. Once in their stomach, the plastic bags cause intestinal blockages, which are deadly. Plastic bags are said to be the most commonly spotted man-made item at sea. To discourage the use of plastic bags, the legislature will establish a high tax on store bags if this bill becomes law.



New bill allows both evolution and creationism in public school



Olympia – Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senators Samantha Kabat and Marissa Grubbs. “This bill addresses the issue of teaching scientific evolution and creationism and will allow students to hear both perspectives in

school,” said Sen. Kabat. According to Sen. Grubbs, not enough information is taught in school textbooks. “The books have roughly six pages on scientific evolution and only one paragraph of creationism.” Opponents of this legislation argue that there is a separation of state and church, but nowhere in the Constitution does it mention the separation of state and church, so both theories should be taught. “The issue is a controversial one,” said Sen. Kabat, “but we believe both sides of the issue should be discussed.”

Put the *student* first in *student athlete*

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jesse Hines and Titus Knight. “This bill addresses the issue of high school athletes participating in sports with poor grades and will not favor talent over academics,” said Sen. Hines. “In



order to raise athletes’ grades up, we must raise the bar,” Steve Iverson, Grants Pass School District superintendent said at the committee hearing. “We know that when we raise the bar, kids usually rise to it. If they can’t go to their

friend’s house until their room is clean, they’ll clean their room.” It’s the same with people in sports, according to Rep. Knight. “Many kids live for their sport and will be willing to sacrifice anything to be able to play. If they have to get straight Cs to play, they will.” This bill will require school districts to set a 2.0 gpa grade requirement for high school athletes to play sports.

Drunk drivers be gone!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Chris Bitting introduced Senate Bill 7979, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will potentially save many lives and keep roads safe,” said Sen. Bitting. Drunk drivers have hurt many lives and broken many families. In 2007 over 1.4 million people were arrested for DUI/DWIs. Illinois, Alaska, California, Colorado, Nebraska, and South Carolina have laws that required people that have been convicted of two or more DUI/DWIs to install a blood alcohol ignition interlock device (BAIID) into their car. To start the car, a person must breathe into the BAIID. A blood alcohol concentration above the legal limit will prevent the car from starting. This bill adds Washington State to the list of states requiring BAIID in cars but goes one step further in requiring the devices in all cars.



Low Emissions = Low Prices

Olympia – House Bill 3333 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Marisa Borer and Taylor Boster. “This bill addresses the issue of CO2 emissions and will encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly automobiles,” said Rep. Borer. The bill will give a sales tax exemption to those who purchase new cars that use alternative energy sources. These cars include hybrids, solar powered, steam powered, biofuelled, and electric cars.

Concussions and head injuries addressed in House bill

Olympia – House Bill 2373 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Cobi Beal and Sam Meyer. “This bill addresses the issue of sports head injuries and will give athletes longer to recover,” said Rep. Beal. Doctors say that athletes should be taking a few days to a week off after being hit in the head during a game. “We believe that it should be a month instead,” said Rep. Myer. “This is because some people are never fully recovered from their short time off and if another head injury happens again, they can lose lots of memory, go through depression, and maybe even die.”

Rep. Pottorff cracks down on pollution



Olympia – House Bill 2337 was introduced yesterday by Representative Nikolai Pottorff. “This bill addresses the issue of ocean pollution and will end the use of plastic bags in Washington State,” said Rep. Pottorff. If enacted, the law calls for an end to the use of all plastic bags in Washington stores by 2010.

Reyna-Gloyd bill reins in gang violence

Olympia – House Bill 3502 was introduced yesterday by Representative Marissa Reyna and Senator Salim Gloyd. “This bill addresses the issue of gang violence and will provide safer alternatives and a way out for current gang members,” said Sen. Gloyd. The bill establishes teen centers, gang rehabilitation centers, and classes on decision making. This will help the prevention of gang involvement and provide safe alternatives to being in a gang.



Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/

